Psalm 94
John 18

752
6·79

Moral Courage.—

Text—

Jesus in Gethsemane.

Brooklin July 4. 1876—

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I ask your attention to the subject of courage — and I know not where to look for a more fitting text for what I have to say than is furnished by the scene among his disciples in the garden — immediately before Jesus was siezed by the officers of the High Priest. — That scene possesses such fascinating interest — that I do not wonder at the church for having established a special festival to hold it in commemoration. — It is interesting because of the brief and half indistinct — yet wonderfully forcible way in which it is told. — It compares with some of the elaborately detailed scenes of history — much as a portrait by some old master compares with the smooth portrayal of buttons and silk in which modern artists sometimes indulge themselves. — So slight is its setting — so powerful the incident itself as it comes down to us. — Above all it is of interest — as it illustrates the character of the man who then reigned

2 his active ministry - and had thenceforward ~~only~~ to possibly suffer what should be laid upon his already sorely burdened soul. - - By some means - Jesus had possessed himself of the knowledge that a plot against his life had been signed, and one of his own disciples ~~sold~~ bribed to betray him into its toils. - How he gained this information whether by natural or supernatural methods - does not affect his character - The question is - having gained it what did he do? - So far as we can see or surmise - his action depended entirely upon himself. - There had been already many threats and plots from which he had escaped unharmed. - Nor does this which at last surrounded him seem a danger ~~from~~ through which he could not readily ~~escape~~ pass - if he chose - as once and again he walked through the ~~murderous~~ multitude and went his way. - Here was no hurrying fate - whirling him ~~on~~ away whither

he knew not - and relieving him will of
~~of~~ responsibility. - He must say whether he would
live or die - and apparently he went into the
garden to decide this great question. -

Leaving his disciples he went forward by himself
to pray. - and out of the agonized conflict
within his soul - arose this prayer - Father
if it be possible let this cup pass from me. -
It is evident that he was deeply moved - and
this agitation is just the clue we need in
order to decide his character. - But for this we
might think ~~him~~ the wonderful calmness and
quiet habitual to him under all circumstances -
mere restless impassivity. - His demeanor throughout
the preceding mockery of a trial - might be linked
with the indifference which looks out upon you,
heavy-eyed, from restless filth and degradation. -
But in that recorded passionate prayer - we are
made aware that he was not indifferent.

It needs not that we should be told. how in his agony he sweat as it were great drops of blood. The cry itself - coming as it did from a heart which had never before questioned or remonstrated with the divine will - shows what a crisis had come in his experience. - Neither is it necessary that we should hunt for causes to explain his distress and hesitation. - Causes there were in abundance - some of which appear to our sight - others doubtless that we cannot understand. It might be recoil from the physical anguish of crucifixion - it might be the rising of old wasting hope in the Jewish national life - slowly ~~dying~~ quite away for want of another David. - or the unwillingness to leave Truth without a champion. - but whatever was the occasion, it wrung from him such pleading words - as had never crossed his lips before. - Then he came back to his disciples - and there he

went apart with God to determine what he must do.— But the last time — when he arose — it was decided — he was to die.— The struggle was over and his unbroken peace had returned to him.— The tempest in his soul — he had banished.— a more notable victory — than that over the winds which lashed blue Galilee,— and not more serene that lovely lake after his word had gone forth over its troubled waters. Then the repose which came back to his perfectly balanced and self-governed nature.— "Arise — said he to his followers — Let us go hence.— He that betrayeth me is at hand.— And straightway he walked not away from — but up to the multitude which had come out to take him — and having received the kiss with which Judas was to designate him — submitted himself without remonstrance to be bound.—

I take this scene to be an illustration of supreme courage,— and to make this fully appear

will perhaps involve some consideration of what- true courage is.— For I readily grant that it is a very slight exhibition of what- is very often named courage- but which is rather only insensibility to suffering,- insensibility which may be sometimes called stupidity- and is again the numbness of frenzy or despair.—

There have been great crises of national history- when terror has seized upon whole millions and made even delicate women- most intrepid soldiers.— So the mother hen will fly in the face of the hawk swooping down upon her brood- though she becomes again a most timid creature, relieved of the spur of fear and fury.— This blind unthinking unhesitating assault upon danger may be called courage.— It is not greatly worth while to quarrel about its name,— But at least it lies not so much in character as in conditions. It ~~is not~~ may be called up in the faintest hearted

by circumstances which make it reckless and desperate.— As insane people seem gifted sometimes with superhuman strength— so the momentary daring of frenzy is no measure of a naturally heroic character.— Neither ought mere immobility in the midst of perilous uncertainty— to pass for courage.— Most men regard death as a trial.— It needs some resolution— we suppose— to resign physical life— without definite knowledge of the hereafter.— Nevertheless indifference may take the place of resolution— and men can hear sentence of death pronounced upon them— without giving any visible sign of emotion.— Most condemned criminals I think— sleep well the night before execution— and walk to the gallows without trembling— sometimes indeed with blasphemous levity upon their lips.— But there is nothing even mock-heroic in this— for the man who is sufficiently hardened to take human life— may well be so reckless

5 of folk that it costs him no effort to die.—
That was a sad destiny which made poor Louis
King of France - during the nations travail to bring
forth liberty.— Sad and undeserved was his tragic
death - and as we behold him there - quietly facing
his mad subjects - who had assembled to see him
die, like the criminal he was not - we instinctively
admire.— - And yet - when we consider how
passively he had lived - how he had floated from
one scene to another - indifferent alike to the
interests of his nobility and the ~~hunger~~ hunger cry of
his starving people - content to swear any national
oath - or lend himself to any intrigue - whichever
should promise present ease.— it is impossible to
invest even his death with much heroism.—

When an ungovernable mob was surging through
his Palace - and had penned him into the embrasure
of a window.— One of his ~~guards~~ grooms said to him. "Sire
do not fear."— "Peor"? said the King - and taking

the soldiers hand - he placed it upon his own heart to show him that its pulsations were not disturbed. It sounds heroic - but after all one knows that his steadiness - was rather lethargy than self command. - - - We need not ~~to~~ look to the deportment of Jesus - during the turning point of his career - for illustration of either of these kinds of courage - if courage they are to be called. - His frame of passion bore him blindly upon his fate. - His death could be neither in defence of honor nor justice. - If he died he must quietly submit to the wrong - in resisting which mens souls find all their fiery energy. - - What upon that memorable night he decided to do - could be done in no heat of excitement - but called for cool and dispassionate self possession to the end. - Whatever courage he displayed was drawn from his own native strength. not from the frenzy of the moment. -

It was the quality of his own character. that was

brought to the test - and that his character conquered - was due to no indifferent trait. - Terrible was the struggle over which he now suspense - Great invention had he to embrace the opportunities for ~~to~~ escape which offered themselves, and temptations to so misread the will of God as to find sanction for escape. - If he was firm in the presence of danger - it was not that he was ignorant of its meaning. - If he remained both outwardly and inwardly at peace - throughout the remainder of his ordeal - it was not because he felt no suffering. - but only because he had resolved to suffer.

Enough has been said to enable us to say furthermore - with certainty - this - that courage is no absolute thing - which we can measure by the number of times it contains an established unit - but like many another finite thing is entirely relative.

You may mark off a given number of feet and inches upon a post, and as men pass upon it you may say definitely of each that he possesses a certain height.— But there is no scale of circumstance — by which you can gauge a man, or tell whether he is more or less manly,— The thistle which so lacerates your hand — is in some horny mouth — a bit of tender food.— So men — their acts — who smile only and feel no pain — in the midst of circumstance which would fret your soul with anguish — and make demand for all the fortitude you could summon,— There is great difference between individuals — in their sensibility of physical pain.— — Men who have faced death upon the battle field without flinching — have been — to tears and trouble — before the — of the dentists chair. and I believe it is no disputed fact that there is a way to obtain this without calling them cowards.— Indeed — a scene would mark us a way — for do we

not know that the most whitehooded moustachioed - who would in panic stricken in the presence of real danger - sometimes bears a cruel surgical operation without shrinking! - There is no doubt that nations to which you and I would be most keenly alive they fall in a much less degree. - obviously there is little heroism in bearing the absence of pain - and when pain is wanting or slight - the mere gentitude under what would cause suffering to others - must not be called courage.

We read wonderful tales about the firmness of Indian Prisoners in former times - under excruciating torture - But for my part - although I am as fond as another - of cherishing the delusions concerning the noble red man - upon which such enthusiastic writers as Cooper - fed my youth - still I find it easier to suppose that the savage nerves were not so sensitive to pain, than that they so vastly excelled us in fortitude. —

contrast if you will the ancient type of soldier - with our volunteer of the last war - and it will very quickly appear who was the hero. - The former lived only to fight. - He come from the lowest social classes and had no other way of earning his livlyhood. - All his ambitions were military - and to shove well under fire was his only recommendation for promotion. - If he died it was but dying. - a soldiers death no coveted - and it would take him away from a dogs life on earth in which was small hope of change for the better. - Such a man was unquestionably good for military purposes. - He could be relied upon at any time when there was wanted only a target for the enemies bullets - and or to march in perfect order - up to the very mouth of a cannon which was belching forth death. - He was a good soldier but after all not much of a hero. - for life or death were both so indifferent to him - that he commonly

hailed the excitement of a battle - and entered it without thought of the issue, - But when we are told of men who had for the time subordinated ~~magnified~~ great hopes - & the chances of war :- who woke each morning to remember loved ones and a pleasant home far away :- who had many strong ties of ambition and affection to bind them to this life :- & in whose minds the sound of battle always called up the thought of what they and those who depended upon them might lose through their death :- when we are told that such men always entered a fight with nameless sickness and dread half smothered within their hearts - yet mounted straight on - or stood in their ranks were food for powder - because that was the duty of the hour - We plainly perceive that this was the soldier who had courage. - Moral courage - for moral bravery is the only true courage extant among men. ——

Courage then as was said is a relative quality -
and bears relation to the suffering which it costs
to do or endure. - It cannot be said to consist
in a certain kind of behavior - in the midst of
certain outward circumstances. - If it does, then how
strange that many another has died as bravely as
Jesus. - It is not said that the things between whom
he was crucified died less submissively than he. -
Yet there was between them this difference to begin
with. - They were there because they could not help
themselves. - he of his own choice. - There is also this further
distinction - that probably no man ever hung upon the
cross - to whom death came laden with more
than Jesus
of physical and mental anguish. - Physically his
finely organized nature must have suffered immeasurably
before his arrest
the worst. - Mentally - at the agony to which I have
referred - ~~before his arrest~~ - bear witness to the
cost of his division. - And that his outward
quiet - was a thin crust of physical self-possession

conceiving inward turmoil.— The terrible cause
when the prayer "Thy will not mine be done" had
conquered over the prayer "Let this cup pass
from me."— His courage consisted not in constant
determined effort to play a certain part at
whatever cost.— but in such a dominant
resolution to do his duty— as left no room for
desire to escape the suffering involved.— Hence
there arose in our struggle or turmoil in his soul,—
and we find in his answer to his accusers, that
deeper than his outward composure— his whole
soul was at peace.— One must distinguish
here between stoicism and true courage.—
Stoicism as we use the word— indicates a
strong calm pursued by strong effort of the will
in the midst of evil against whose shock the
heart rebels.— It is not unworthy admiration and
fame.— But the courage of Jesus was yet
higher.— for his was a living serenity from

maintained by devotion to the will of God - while
he groaning heart recoils without rebelling the
baffling of affliction - knows that was duty. -
Silence is only partial act command. - The
true courage is in subordination to the right -
perfect - that to suffer, when by faith or reason
we discern that a higher Power wills us to
suffer. - - It is then in all circumstances
of life - whether they be accounted of men trying -
or easily met - ~~obtained~~ in all claims - whether
lifting us into public notice when our deeds are praised
or blamed of many - or keeping us in obscurity
- known only our own conscience pardons us victor
- unpraised: - ~~obtained~~ whatever we may be - & in
whatever condition - our courage - as God
wills of it - is the fortitude with which
we meet the sorrow appointed to us. - That is
to say - it is the measure of our disposition to
serve without remuneration - whether the world

10 of God - or our own ~~unbe~~ ascertained duty - summons us to endure. - If the suffering be slight - the courage manifested a small - unseen by a figure it may be upon the page of history. - If the suffering be great then the courage which rises to its level must be great, also - though fame should never sing its praise. - It is not pretended that this human can at all times succeed - but only that it is greater than success. - The life which rises above its grief - is in every way nobler - more satisfactory to self and to God - than the life which has known no grief. - Say you - who look back upon many a fierce effort to lift your head above the deep of loss, - if in the struggle your manhood or womanhood has been exalted and strengthened - if your heart's courage has risen to the level of its grief and fear - would you wish that one pang had been spared you? - The fierce fire - the more thoroughly

of the Lord reigns. — and who that has brought
out from the promise the shining ambit of promise —
[illegible] impulse
[illegible] consist of the dross of fleshly [illegible],
and not acknowledge that God's method was wise
& [illegible] in shrinking timidity? —

We read from time to time — that the human age
is dead — and Lord Comte's words over the
Sepulchre. — We know no longer this party
[illegible] nor are we aware of whom the Spirit con-
victs. — The spirit of Christ no longer
breathes — The light of romance is departed. — Life
is a dull and prosaic routine of venal virtues
and sacrifices. — with ignoble measure. — The fire
of enthusiasm has burned down into the smoulder-
ing coarse stove. — The public good for which
men are ready to live and die — is worn
[illegible] and soiled over many changes counters —
— passed down from time to time in the dimensions
of a compromise. — until having been bandied about

for a time like a shellbeach - it is kicked into a corner and forgotten. - Thus more than one indignant mutter when woman is Ruskin makes moan. - All this one feels when some upstart of yesterday - who does not yet rightly know whether his own soul is a reality or a delusion - turns round upon the immediate past - and makes it the butt of his cruel shot that shot is a found at any rate. - But upstarts and sentimentalism aside, can we say that the human age is dead and past - and if so what should be the token of its decease? - is it that human nature is healed and mended so that it no longer suffers keenly? - Or that its suffering is met with less publicity than once? - We might say at first that mankind suffers less than formerly. - So great ~~—~~ advance has been made in the art of living - ~~that~~ in all ways there is so much less of friction - that we seem to have escaped at least much anguish and woe. -

Nature as well as individuals are more prone for us
in a system of order - and many distances of forms
and for and we - are refined or vulgar. - Oh, but -
there is something more to be said - Consider that
the mind which has found this higher order - has
thereby made itself more delicate and is
potentially more liable to suffer from disorder. -
To such an ear to distinguish harmony is also to
and it to distinguish discord. - The hard insensitive
mind accustomed to rough labor - is schooled to
many a wrong chord. - The delicate hand of a
woman used for fine work - must be more
easily grated from sooner. - Rest assured
that so far from having escaped suffering - mankind
is but now learning to suffer. - and therefore the
human age so far from being dead is just dawning
upon the world. - You may point to beasts and
birds - I will show you many a quiet woman
who makes no heroic pretensions - but who yet, knows

12 more of the courage it takes to do ones duty
than ~~any~~ any spartan hero who ever breathed
I say emphatically that heroism is not dead nor
dying. The influence of Christ has gone for
something - for it has taught the world that
it is ~~is~~ cause for rejoicing, to be accounted worthy
to suffer for righteousness sake. - even when the
anguish is as keen as that which comes to the
truest softest soul. - With every generation since
the time when
" men fought like beasts - and died like beasts
only dimly sensible of pain - the ~~cultivation~~ slow culture of
the race - has increased its capacity - both for
suffering and pleasure. - (for the possibilities of the
two must always go together). - and always in
accordance with ~~it~~ the promise - as its day - so has
its strength been. - Its courage has been called
out and developed - as need of endurance has
arisen. - and at this very time if we could look
into each others hearts. - and read there the lingering

to
traces of old pain which we have learned to live down.
I know we should acknowledge - that there is a heroism
about the common life of today - which eclipses the
warlike deeds of antiquity. - - And so it must be
to the end of time - that as the race advances - courage
must increase, to enable it to meet the new burdens
put upon it. - So it must be in our own lives
to the end. - for though we are always promising
ourselves an easy time some little way in the future
the easy time never comes. - Greater happiness we
find as the years advance - but also cares multiply
about us - and pain has a sharper tooth. - The young
man - impetuously dashes forward toward the right, nor
heeds what wreck he makes. - In his blind
ardor he crashes through the old order of things as though
it were so much straw. - and scarcely feels a
pang of regret. - But the keener eye of age, reads only
consequences more accurately - and follows duty
of resolution
at much greater cost. - - On the minds of young people

13 disappointment produces only a transient impression which quickly gives place to hope.— But the memory of the old—retains over after over the print of grief— Youth has few attachments to surroundings— age leans upon them more and more,— and with every added year the loss of what it loves becomes more dreadful.— This is the common experience—and we were wise to prepare for it.— One thing is certain— by so much as we grow and ripen,— by so much are we laid under added liability to suffering.— and though we could stand where Jesus stood— still we should not have escaped this liability.— One resource alone is left us— to learn his courage.— Through what trial comes to us to school ourselves to endure as he did.— Then whatever may come to us— above strife and pain and regret— the peace of God shall rest upon us.— ~~The keen atmosphere~~ and the fathomless guilt- of ~~the region of storm, and then they will~~ christian fortitude— shall preserve our conscious faith ~~regain nothing touch them~~— unshaken in the worst of storms.—